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TESTIMONY OF
ELEANOR CUTRI SMEAL
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN, INC.

H.R. 12728

MAY 31, 1978

My name is Eleanor Cutri Smeal; I am President of the National Organization for Women, Inc. (NOW).

On behalf of NOW, the largest feminist organization in the United States, with members and chapters throughout the nation, I am testifying in support of H.R. 12728, the "Susan B. Anthony Dollar Coin Act of 1978."

We understand the Administration has proposed legislation which provides for the minting of a dollar coin and that this coin will commemorate a woman. We understand, too, that in seeking a compromise, the Administration has proposed to honor the mythical "Miss Liberty." This would be a grievous error and could only be interpreted as a statement by the President that there is no American woman worthy of such recognition.

In introducing their bill, Congresswomen Oakar and Schroeder have sought to correct this oversight on the part of the Administration. We applaud their leadership in this very symbolic effort. Clearly, the only logical and appropriate choice is Susan B. Anthony.

Almost all of our circulating coins honor real Americans. To date, the Americans honored on our coins have been men. The decision to honor a woman is certainly timely, if not overdue. The representation of liberty in the figure of a woman was an early artist's romanticized concept which first appeared on minor coins in 1793. Surely the Administration cannot mean to suggest that women have done nothing of note since then.

There have been many great women who have had a significant impact on our history. Susan B. Anthony is representative of these great contributions women have made to secure the ideals for which our country stands. She dedicated her life to obtaining full citizenship for women. Her efforts have contributed to the expanding opportunities and participation of women in our society.

To honor a mythical and romanticized image of women embodied in "Miss Liberty" rather than a real woman such as Susan B. Anthony could only be interpreted at the least as ambivalence towards the expanding roles of women, and at the most as outright hostility to the recognition of women's rights.

The United States has traditionally honored on its coins those who served in political office. It is time that we recognize the contributions of others who gave their lives for freedom and equality. Susan B. Anthony was an active participant in the great social change movements of her time. She expended her life's energy in the fight for the causes of freedom, justice, and equality -- a fight which goes on today. It is important that we recognize and pay suitable tribute to her work.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, the National Organization for Women strongly endorses the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin and urges your support and favorable action on H.R. 12728.

Oaker -
logic overtook me, but
very subtle -
Both women
+ others all deserve
to be honored in
individual way
They are not
nearly
historically
important woman

Conclusion
one could
draw

Leach -
S- Don't want either/or
position
Don't want feminist wave
pitted against black C.R.
movement
So frequently we supposed
it is one thing
Leach - Most women groups
I talked to prefer 2 women
in town

This Susan is fettering
Leach - logic in your
argument is don't
think intent that would
take a woman for one man
precedent on coin coin
+ would decide
This the two have complementary
careers. b.
Oaker - Don't think Susan
should stand alone to
avoid controversy -
Don't think there shouldn't
be 2 want to avoid cont.
Make commitment that black Am
should stand alone in his/her
own right

→ S- Would not want to give
appearance that it would take
more than one woman to replace a man
impression that not just one could cut another
Susan should be one coin, by self;
her work w/o duplication
Consider other great Am
Make commitment to solving problem -
Not solve all problems w/ one coin
(black + woman) -
they not to do all things w/ one coin
glad decided to face this problem -
want
→ children have all history before
them, even in this token fashion